642, 728, 177, 565

Syria	MD1
Israel	MF1
Jordan	MG1
Iraq	MH1

/For an account of the political regime, social stratification, and Westernizing of administration under the British and French Mandates following the First World War, see 66: Bonné, M1 Middle East, category 116, pp. 88-101./

9: Hitti S-5 (ca. 1926) 1928 MD1 Syria MD1
Druze MD6

Other Secret Sects:—The Druze people constitute one of the two leading secret sects found only in Syria, the other being the Nuṣayriyyah inhabiting the mountains north of Tripoli. The Ismā'iliyyah of the Ḥims and Ḥamāh district, another secret sect, are descended from the Assassins,[1] who for two centuries or so struck awe and terror into the hearts of the Crusaders, and are represented today by a few other sectarians in Persia and India. The Yezīdis, so-called devil worshipers, practice their hidden rites in the out-of-the-way hills between Antioch and Aleppo and have coreligionists in Kurdistān and Armenia.

Special Interest of this Study:—But of all these sects Druzism is perhaps the most interesting and important. It is still a living force. Its followers form to the present day a vigorous and flourishing community in the Lebanon. Its learned system has not changed since it was first inaugurated in the early part of the eleventh century. The Islam of the Near East has changed and adapted itself to the requirements of the varying conditions. The Christianity of the Near East has changed. But the Druze system has been and still is the same.

The modernizing influence has in late years brought within its sphere quite a large number of the young and uninitiated Druzes. The report of the American University of Beirūt for last year indicates that there are in that institution alone thirty-six Druze students and five Druze teachers. But no one with first-hand knowledge of the situation would go so far as even to recognize the existence of a "modernist movement" alleged to be aiming at divulging the Druze beliefs, much less to declare "It is understood that Dr. Bliss of Beirūt will be the probable intermediary of communication with the western world if this disclosure takes place."[2]

In fact the outside world knows so little about the contents of this religion that in a recent session of the Permanent Mandates

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[1] Arabic *Ḥashshāshīn* — those addicted to the use of a stupefying weed.

[2] De Lacy O'Leary, *A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate* (London, 1923), p. 244. Dr. Bliss died in 1920.

177 Syria has not been merely a passive receptacle for influences coming in from outside. Whether or not the hypothesis of an indigenous population and culture be accepted, it is certain that the geographical structure of the country, and the nature of its inhabitants as modified by that structure, have determined the forms which the incoming streams of influence have taken. For example, the sharp geographical divisions of Syria have helped to perpetuate the differences between various elements in the population, which have come into the country from different directions or from the same direction at different times: racial and tribal divisions have given rise to an intense localism of feeling, which has linked itself in various ways with the prejudices, the hostilities and the exclusiveness generated by the great political and religious conflicts of the past. Localism and particularism have deeply affected the political life of the country. Sometimes, when Syria has formed part of a larger political unit with a strong Government, they have been held in check ; but when the unit has disintegrated, or the Government has grown weak, the country has been partitioned between a number of petty and ephemeral local dynasties, more often than not at variance with one another.

Local and communal feeling is closely linked with the persistence of tradition. Throughout almost the whole of history the Syrians have been subjected to a succession of foreign conquerors. They have been forced at least partially to accept the customs and cultures of their rulers, and in the process they have acquired two arts : the art of rapid and superficial assimilation, and that of preserving, beneath new modes of behaviour and in new forms, their old beliefs and ways of living. ' Bow down to every nation which passes over you, but remember me in your hearts ', said one of the founders of the Druze sect. It is a lesson which not only the Druzes have learned.

177 But the role of the Syrian population has not merely been one of assimilating, or resisting, outside influences. It has transformed these influences and spread them to the surrounding world, and it has made its own and original contributions to civilization. From the time of the Phœnicians, Syrian merchants have been scattered throughout western Asia and the Mediterranean world. Syrian officials helped to administer the Roman, the Arab and the Ottoman Empires.

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Syrian writers and thinkers contributed to the culture of the Greek, the Latin and the Arabic languages. Even to-day, after centuries of stagnation, there are large and important Syrian mercantile communities in North and South America, in West Africa and elsewhere; and Syrian teachers, journalists, doctors and officials are to be found in all the countries of the Arabic world.

Above all, Syria is the birthplace of Christianity and Judaism. Ever since Europe became Christian, the principles by which its spiritual and moral life have been guided have come to it clothed in an imagery drawn largely from the beauties and way of life of Syria's countryside; and to the believer her very ground is holy.

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As far back as our records go, the forces described above can be seen at work. The curtain of history rises on a Syria of which the population is already mainly Semitic, and is continually being reinforced in its Semitic character by fresh waves of immigration. For example, the Canaanites and the Phœnicians entered the country during the third millennium B.C., and the Hebrews and Aramæans in the second. At some time or another all of these peoples established States in different portions of the country. Thus a great part of coastal Syria was for many centuries under the control of the Phœnicians, who established trading centres throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond; and for a time a portion of southern Syria constituted a Hebrew State.

These Semitic States deserved well of mankind. The Phœnicians built up a trading system which covered the whole Mediterranean basin, and established colonies as far away from their homeland as France and Spain. But what they did is of small account compared with the record of the Jews. Their intense and stormy history was the channel through which the world came to knowledge of God; a knowledge which bore fruit among them in an unbending passion for righteousness and a matchless poetry of devotion.

From the earliest times Syria was in touch with Egypt, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and the Ægean world, and usually the greater part of it was under the sway of foreign rulers. The whole or a large portion of the country was subdued successively by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Hittites, the Persians,

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and police force. Feudal privileges were abolished, and all were declared equal before the law.

Until the First World War Lebanon was ruled in accordance with this Statute. It was on the whole a period of increasing prosperity. It is true that unrest was not immediately stilled. The abolition of feudal privileges raised new social problems, and thus led to renewed agitation among the Maronite peasants, whose leader, Yusuf Karam, was finally sent away from Lebanon; and discontented Druzes continued to emigrate to Jebel Druze. But gradually the traditional state of religious toleration returned. The governors, who were Christians from outside Lebanon, were in general efficient and humane, and defended the autonomy of the Mountain against the attempts of the Sultan to infringe it. Agriculture revived, roads were built, schools were opened, and Western civilization extended its sway.[1]

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For the rest of the century the Ottoman Empire continued to be the object of European interest and rivalry. The tension between Great Britain and Russia which was temporarily relaxed by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 did not directly concern Syria. But the struggle between Russia and France for control of the Holy Places in Palestine, which had been the occasion of the Crimean War, was still not altogether ended. By its side new rivalries grew up. Italy disputed France's rights in regard to the Catholic communities and Holy Places; and towards the end of the century Germany began to stake her claim. In the reign of Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909) German influence over the Ottoman Government grew continuously and gradually replaced that which Great Britain had once possessed. The Berlin to Baghdad railway, which German enterprise partially constructed, skirted the northern edge of Syria and might well, had not the First World War broken out, have served as a means of German penetration into that and other provinces of the Empire.

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Western influence thus played an important part in the political life of the country; it played an even more important one in the social and economic changes of the century. Syrian

[1] The exact boundaries of the sanjaq of Lebanon were never clearly established.

life in all its aspects underwent a gradual and still incomplete process of Westernization. The tastes and habits of the population were profoundly influenced by the inflow of goods from the West; their beliefs and way of thinking still more profoundly so by the spread of Western culture.

The reception of Western civilization was helped by the emigration of many thousands of Syrians to other countries. In general they came more often from Lebanon than from other regions, and they were more often Christians than Moslems. Their motives for leaving their country were various. Many of the Christians desired to escape from a predominantly Moslem environment, especially after the events of 1860; many among both Christians and Moslems found Ottoman rule too oppressive to be borne; young men educated in the mission-schools wished for opportunities and rewards greater than their native land could offer; some were attracted by the legendary promise of the New World, its wealth and its freedom; and others went abroad simply because their relations and friends had already settled there.

There were two main roads of emigration. The one led to Egypt and the Sudan and, to a lesser extent, the other Arabic-speaking countries. This road had always been open, but it was rendered more attractive by the establishment of British control over Egypt and the Sudan. The British authorities needed subordinate officials who spoke Arabic and understood the ways of the Near East, but who were also acquainted with Western methods of thought and administration. They found what they needed in the graduates of the Syrian mission-schools, who for half a century loyally and effectively filled a variety of positions in the Governments of Egypt and the Sudan. Thousands of other Syrians went to Egypt as merchants, doctors and journalists. They progressed, and some among them played a considerable part in the cultural life of the country. Being largely an urban middle-class community, partly Christian and suspected of an excessive attachment to Great Britain or at least to the West, the Syrian-Egyptians have not always been liked by the Egyptians; but many of them have become Egyptians in nationality and sentiment, and at least the Moslems among them may become assimilated in a generation or two to the population among whom they are living.

The Syrian-Egyptians are numbered in tens of thousands,

but those who have followed the other road, to North and South America, to Australia and to other of the more distant parts of the world, must be counted in hundreds of thousands. The great majority of them started as retail traders on a small scale, but many took to wholesale trade and to the manufacture of textiles and other goods. The process of taking root was harder for them than for those who went to Egypt, since it involved learning new languages and acquiring new ways of life; but they have already been assimilated to a considerable extent, and the large Syrian colonies in the United States, Brazil and the Argentine, with smaller ones in other countries, have become prosperous, loyal and respected elements in the communities in which they are living. Most of them have given up all but a sentimental attachment to their country of origin, and there seems to be no obstacle to their ultimate complete assimilation, the more so since the flow of emigrants to the countries of the New World has greatly diminished during the last two decades. It has been partly diverted to British and French West Africa, much of the internal trade of which is now in Syrian hands.

The consequences of the emigration for Syria were both good and bad. They were bad in so far as it was the more talented and enterprising of the country's youth who went abroad, during the period of their greatest energy and often for ever. On the other hand, the level of prosperity was raised by the remittances which successful emigrants sent home to their relatives, and by the savings which they brought back with them. Also, they introduced new ideas, and, what was even more important, the example of a new and in many respects attractive way of life. These ideas, this example and the bare fact that Syrians were prosperous and happy in foreign lands, deeply influenced the attitude of Syria to the West. All this was especially true of Lebanon, since it supplied so large a proportion of the emigrants.

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Western influences also came by way of education. Students began to go abroad, to seek the new learning in the schools of Europe and America; and Western schools became ever more numerous in the Near East. The greater number of them were established and maintained by foreign missionary institutions. Jesuit and other Catholic schools had existed since the

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seventeenth century, but it was only in the eighteen-thirties that conditions arose in which their numbers and influence could increase; and it was during the same decade that American Protestant schools became important. During the second half of the century a new step was taken, with the creation in 1866 of the institution which subsequently became the American University of Beirut; nine years later, in 1875, the Jesuit college which was later to become the Université de S. Joseph, was transferred to Beirut from Ghazir, where it had been established in 1843. Towards the end of the century Russian, German and other religious schools were established, the French Mission Laïque began its work, and the Ottoman Government itself started to create schools and colleges on Western lines.

The spread of Western education, the growth of commercial relations with Western countries and other factors brought into existence a class of people who knew French, English and other European languages, often as well as and sometimes better than their native Arabic. Knowledge of these languages gave them the key to a whole new world of ideas and images.

The spread of Western ideas, the rediscovery and publication of the Arab classics by Western orientalists, the introduction of the printing-press and the establishment of newspapers and periodicals led to a revival of Arabic literature. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the creative use of the classical Arabic language had almost entirely ceased. The old authors were scarcely read; such poetry and prose as were produced were imitations of archaic models; except for religious schools, which mainly confined themselves to the memorization of the Quran, no sort of literary education existed. But gradually what had been dead came to life again. Around the mission-schools in Beirut gathered a group of Syrian writers, most of them Christians, who set themselves to evolve a modern Arabic idiom and style suitable for the expression of Western ideas, and to use the instrument thus created to familiarize the Arabs with the civilization of Europe and to render them conscious of their own problems. At the same time another group was being created in Cairo by means of the schools, educational missions and translations initiated or encouraged by Muhammad Ali and his successors; similar to the Beirut group in many ways, it differed from it by a greater concern with the

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question of Islam and modern civilization, and a greater caution in accepting ideas and innovations from Europe.

These two groups, and smaller, less important groups in other towns, have laid the foundations of a new Arabic literature. To a great extent their work has been preparatory. The Arabic language has been rendered more adequate and flexible, for example by the adoption or invention of technical terms. Western ideas have been spread through translations and works of popularization. New literary forms have been introduced—the poetic drama, the novel, the romantic autobiography—and at the same time old forms have been revived. In addition to the advances in form, the subject-matter of literature has been extended. Different groups have set themselves to expound subjects not hitherto treated: the relations between religion and secular culture, the position of women, the method of empirical science, and so on. In all this preparatory work, the influence of French and English thought and literature has been great and obvious.

Modern Arabic literature has so far produced nothing of great originality, nothing of much interest to the outer world. But there have been a number of honest, hard-working and courageous writers, who have deserved well of the Arabic-speaking peoples: for example, the religious thinker Muhammad Abdu, the social reformer Qasim Amin, the essayist al-Manfaluti, the poets Ahmad Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim, the playwright and novelist Tawfiq al-Hakim and the scholar Taha Husain.

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These names are all those of Egyptians, and Cairo is the unquestioned centre of Arabic literature. But there have been very important Syrian and Lebanese writers, many of whom it is true worked for most of their lives in Egypt, although others remained in their own country. They include the scholars and poets of the Bustani and Yaziji families; the religious reformer Rashid Rida; the fathers of Arabic journalism Shidiaq, Nimr, Sarruf, Zaidan and Taqla; the poet Khalil Mutran; the best of women writers in Arabic, May Ziadah; the traveller Amin Rihani; and the mystic Khalil Jibran. The last two spent many years in the United States and wrote much of their work in English. They are the most distinguished of a group of Syrian-American writers who have planted in the new world a root of Arabic literature, which in spite of its qualities can hardly hope to survive a generation.

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the tribe or collection of clans, held together by blood-relationship and regulated by customary law dispensed by chieftains who owed their position to a combination of birth and ability.

Arab life and society were reflected in the literature of the Arabic tongue: a literature which at least in its early phases grew up in isolation, developing its own norms and methods. Later it was influenced by other literatures, but throughout its history it preserved a continuity of outlook and subject-matter and perfectly expressed the dreams, the convictions and the limitations of the people which produced it.

7

The Arabian influences were brought into Syria by the successive waves of Beduin immigrants from Arabia; a few generations after the Islamic conquest they had permeated virtually the whole population, whether or not they were Arabian by origin. The popular morality, the folk-lore and the language of the people became Arabic, and the literate took pride in Arabic poetry and prose. Tribalism and loyalty to the clan or patriarchal family continued to be the bases of society even in conditions very different from those which had generated them. The depth of Arabization varies however from one part of the country to another. In certain sections of the coastal mountain-ranges Arab ways took longer to penetrate and perhaps went less deep than in the plains of the interior.

The only important elements in the population which were not Arabized were the Kurdish and Turcoman tribes which at a later period had established themselves in the northern portions of the country, and some of which from being nomads had become semi-sedentary or sedentary. They however were not wholly isolated from the majority, since they were orthodox Moslems and possessed a tribal organization similar to that of the Arabs. There were also Armenians, Turks and Europeans in the larger towns.

8

The Arab tradition was modified by the new economic conditions which the tribes found when they reached the Fertile Crescent. Those tribes which remained on the edge of the Crescent continued their pastoral life; but those which

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from outside than were the villages. The foreign merchants and artisans in the coastal towns and Aleppo, the pilgrims who every year met in Damascus for their long journey down the pilgrims' road to the Holy Cities in Arabia, left their mark. Thus beside the society of the desert and the countryside there flourished an urban society of merchants and craftsmen. Not only was the life of the great towns very different from that of the countryside; they differed one from another. Each had a life of its own and was the focus of an intense local loyalty.

10

The Arabo-Islamic community of Syria was a part, although in some ways a distinctive part, of two larger units: the Arabic-speaking world which extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the frontiers of Persia, and included Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula; and the Islamic world, stretching as far as the marches of China and embracing, in addition to the Arabic countries, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan and large parts of Africa, India, China and the East Indies. In spite of local differences, of internal conflicts and of the difficulties of communication, each of these worlds was unified on a profound level.

Over a large part of the Arab and Islamic worlds, the spiritual and social unity which they possessed was reinforced by the political unity derived from common membership of the Ottoman Empire. The positive virtue of Ottoman rule was that it provided this political unity; its negative that it did not interfere with the life and customary law of the subject-peoples. Nomads by origin, the Ottoman Turks cared little for the arts of peace, for commerce and industry, or for culture. They left them to others, and thus contributed nothing essential to the civilization of the Arab provinces which they ruled for four hundred years. In conquering the Arab world they had themselves been conquered by it. They had become Moslems, and in their intellectual and social life had adapted themselves to Arab ways.

The Turks performed also another function. Their military strength preserved the Arab civilization from interference or even from living contact with other civilizations. In the early Islamic centuries such contacts had existed, and the Arabo-

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Islamic world had been much affected by influences from the Mediterranean countries, from Persia and from India. It had had the power to assimilate the products of other civilizations, and also to extend its dominion over peoples alien to the Arabs in origin and way of life. But later it ceased to develop and either to give out or to receive influences; and although the stream of influences from the West never completely vanished, during the great days of the Ottoman Empire it was smaller and less effective than it had previously been and was again to become.

II

In the past century or more this Arab world has been shaken to its foundations by the impact of the West. Western ideas, learned from schools, from books and latterly from the cinema, have changed at least the externals of social life. The competition of Western goods has broken the old crafts and opened up new economic possibilities. New means of communication are breaking up the closed local community; the life of the Bedouin is threatened by the motor-car, the aeroplane and the extension of civil authority. The administrative machinery which the modern Government commands, and the extension of the limits of its action, are making the old feudal and sectarian organization unnecessary and even impossible. New Western rulers have imposed themselves, who have not even so much claim to be obeyed or such deep roots in popular memory and habit as had the Ottoman Sultan. The new social, economic and political life has in its turn shaken the domination of Moslem jurisprudence; and men have begun to raise new questions of the adequacy of religious faith and loyalty as a basis for society, and the place of Islam in the modern world. A new world has revealed itself, which strikes at the very foundations of the old, and is indeed its exact antithesis.

The transformation of the old life has brought with it a number of difficulties and dangers. The Arabs, like other peoples in their position, are torn between two ways of life. Sentiment, tradition and the belief that there is something of value in their tradition make them unwilling to break entirely with the old civilization, even if that were possible. But at the same time the necessities of modern life, and often a conviction that the Western civilization is in some ways

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IV. THE WESTERNIZATION OF IDEAS

I

THE coming of the West aroused a new process of thought not only in Syria but in all the Arabic-speaking countries; this process originated earliest and has developed furthest in Cairo and Beirut, but exists in some form in the other centres of Arab life, and is a single process which does not admit of sharp regional divisions. Much of this chapter will therefore concern itself with the general movement of thought in Arabic. Moreover, it will be necessary for the sake of exposition to formulate theoretical standpoints more clearly, articulately and abstractly, and in sharper opposition to one another, than they are formulated by contemporary Arabic writers.

The civilization of the West revealed itself in many lights to the Arabs. It came to them asserting, in act if not in word, its own superiority and its contempt for the East; thus it aroused a sense of humiliation, the more bitter because the Arabs had for so long regarded themselves as the source of true religion and civilization. It came to them as a Christian civilization, and thus it compelled them to take a new view of Christianity and of its relationship with Islam. Again, although it was Christian, it was also secular, denying the theocratic idea of life and politics; thus it stimulated thought about the place of religion in society. It preached and practised a new view of human relationships; it was based upon an undreamed-of mechanical power and an unknown economic organization; it was prosperous and unimaginably strong. In these aspects it was to be feared as a force of oppression and destruction; but also perhaps to be imitated, since it held out hopes of an equal prosperity and strength. Above all, it appeared as a revolutionary force, threatening or promising radical change for worse or for better.

Some Arabs, among them many of the religious leaders, averted their gaze from the possibilities of the new world, and regarded it simply as a hostile force to be resisted; except in the remote places of the Arabian peninsula, this school of thought has now practically died out. There were and still are others who are so intoxicated with the splendour of the West that they are prepared to give up not only their own traditions but even their faith in a special destiny for the Arabs and Islam, and to become fully and uncritically

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Westernized as soon as possible. But the greater number of thoughtful Arabs have since the beginning of the Western penetration refused to go to either extreme. They realize that there is much that is good in Western civilization; that their own civilization is ill; and that its maladies would make it desirable, even did not its weakness make it inevitable, that it should be influenced and transformed by the West. But at the same time they can see clearly the faults in the West and the qualities of their own tradition; more fundamentally, they have faith that the Arab and Islamic peoples have creative gifts of their own and in consequence a special part to play in human history. Therefore their reaction to the impact of the West has been neither uncritical rejection nor uncritical acceptance, but a process of questioning which still continues: What can the Arabs become? What can they do in the world? What form and degree of Westernization will best serve to revive their creative spirit?

The paragraphs which follow will summarize some of the answers which different groups of Arabic thinkers give to these questions. It must however be made clear in advance that the explicit views of particular thinkers are only one among several factors which will determine the answer which the Arabs give to these questions. Men brought up in the Arabic language and the Moslem faith, and in unceasing contact with the West in their thoughts and their lives, are forced by the nature of their situation to make judgements and decisions about the acceptance or rejection of Western ideas and ways; these judgements and decisions are influenced or even determined by the Arab and Moslem standards of those who make them; and having been made they involve others which perhaps had not been foreseen. Thus by a process of unformulated and unsystematic thought the structure of society gradually changes. A thinker of genius may alter the direction of that process; but in the absence of genius, the explicit doctrines of the intellectual élite may have only a very limited effect.

2

The first task of the Arab thinkers was to understand the West. It was effectively begun in the days of Muhammad Ali in Egypt, has continued ever since and is still far from completion. Its methods are various: schools on the Western

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model or under Western control have been established; students have sought foreign universities, on their own initiative or as members of official missions; European languages have been studied and Western books translated into Arabic. At present the Arabs, at least in the more advanced of the Arab countries, have achieved a certain understanding of Western technology and natural science, and of the polite literature of England and France. But Christianity, European philosophy, music and art, the whole culture of Russia and central Europe and the literature of the ancient world are still very imperfectly known.

The study of the West has itself done something to Westernize the Arab mind. The student cannot be unaffected by the object of his thought. In so far as theories of Westernization have been formulated, they fall into two main categories, which may conveniently be called theories of Islamic revival and of secularization. As expounded below they are 'ideal types'; any particular Arab thinker will probably be found to hold not one of the theories in its pure form, but a distinctive blend of several.

3

The movement of Islamic revival springs from a vision of an Arabo-Islamic society which neither apes the West nor clings blindly to outworn forms: of which the animating spirit and the principles of judgement are derived from Islam, but the ways of life and thought largely approximate or 'correspond' to those of Western society; and which has a 'healthy' relationship to the Christian world, a relationship of mutual respect and influence, based upon the acknowledgement of equality.

This much would be generally agreed, but there is great difference of opinion about the methods by which such a state of affairs could be brought into existence. There are some who claim that what is necessary is not so much a regeneration of the spirit and thought of Islam as an effort to unify and direct the political efforts of the Islamic peoples in defence of the Islamic world against Western penetration. They wish to accept only the externals of Western civilization, the sources of its economic and military strength. This was the doctrine of the Pan-Islamic movement, originated by Jemal ad-Din al-Afghani in Egypt and elsewhere during the

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later decades of the nineteenth century, and used by the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in order to revive the waning prestige and influence of his throne. Its weakness was its failure to recognize the malady in the soul of Islam.

There are other movements whose exponents see the necessity not simply for political action but for a revival in the religious life of Islam, and who believe that Islam is capable of producing such a revival out of its own resources. This is the attitude of thinkers who support the Wahabi movement, which aims at returning to the primitive purity and fervour of the apostolic age of Islam, and at removing all those later accretions and distortions which can find no justification in the Quran or the Traditions of the Prophet. Wahabism originated in central Arabia in the eighteenth century, and has had a great influence upon Islamic life during the present generation, largely because of the political success of the Wahabi leader, Abdul-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, King of Sa'udi Arabia.

Wahabism and similar movements are concerned primarily with religious practice, and regard theology and speculation with suspicion, as unnecessary and possibly dangerous. But there are other movements which, while not belittling the need for a revival of piety and the devotional life, believe also in the necessity for a reconsideration and re-statement of Islamic doctrine and for a revision of Islamic jurisprudence; and they realize that these tasks can only be accomplished with the help of the intellectual methods and achievements of the modern West. The movement originated by Shaikh Muhammad Abdu in Egypt, and sometimes called the 'Islamic Modernist Movement', was in one of its aspects an attempt to respond to the need for a re-statement of Islamic doctrine. The leaders of this movement have been able and sincere men, and their achievement and influence have been great. But as a movement of thought its effectiveness has been limited by two factors. On the one hand, its knowledge and understanding of Western culture are defective; it has been too exclusively concerned with modern science, or at least with nineteenth century 'scientificism'; and it has not attempted to arrive at a profound understanding of the basic elements in Western thought, Greek philosophy and Christian theology. On the other hand, it has at times been much concerned with polemics, with showing that Islam has

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fundamental principles. But it is important also for other reasons. Greek thought lies at the root of that Islamic philosophy of the Middle Ages of which the significance has already been mentioned: it is therefore part of the intellectual heritage of the Islamic East as well as of the West; it may serve as that common ground of agreement and understanding which is necessary if a fruitful intellectual contact is to be re-established between the Moslem and the Christian worlds.

5

The Syrian people will have a special part to play in the intellectual reconstruction of Islam, because of certain characteristics which they possess. They are peculiarly aware of the 'tension' between East and West, and between Islam and Christianity. This is partly because their minds are exceptionally subtle, flexible and sensitive; but partly also because Syria has always been exposed to influences coming in from Mediterranean lands, and tends to be affected by them sooner and more profoundly than the other Arab countries. Through the mission-schools, through emigration and in other ways there has been built up in Syria an educated class Westernized in spirit as well as in externals, but still Arabic in language and for the most part in sympathies and feeling. Thus the conflict between East and West has become a conflict inside their own souls; as such it raises problems which pose themselves with peculiar urgency.

The factors which make the problems more profoundly felt and more urgent in Syria than elsewhere make them also more likely to find a solution there. It is educated Syrians who are best fitted to see the tension between East and West on the level not of politics or polemics but of doctrine. But if they are to contribute effectively to the revival of the Arab and Islamic mind, they must develop an intellectual life of their own, and not be content to become culturally a province of Egypt.

6

There is one factor which gives Syria a unique position in the Arab world. It possesses a large Christian population, whose intellectual life and Christian consciousness have been reviving in recent years. The impact of the West upon them has been as great as upon the Moslems, although of course it has taken a

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria 8/01

different form: the West has meant for them not only the discovery of a new way of life but, in the most fundamental things, a rediscovery of their true selves. The result has been an interesting and important revival of Christian culture, expressing itself through Arabic and through French. It began as a revival of literature and language, and as such was a part, and a very important part, of the general Arabic literary renaissance; but gradually it is becoming conscious of the deepest spiritual question which faces it, the question of what it is to be an Arab Christian.

This movement of Christian life and thought is important first of all for its own sake, but also for the part it may play in the re-awakening of Islam. The Syrian Christians are, as Christians, particularly fitted to understand the culture of Europe; while as Arabs, speaking the Arabic language and conversant with its literature, they can interpret Europe to the Arab Moslems and, what is more important still, can confront them inescapably with the challenge of Christianity. They do not feel the conflict between the West and the Islamic East in exactly the same form as that in which Moslems feel it. But they feel it in another form, and in one which raises problems of which the solution is both particularly necessary and particularly difficult. For them the problem poses itself as one of political loyalties, and therefore their material well-being and perhaps even their physical safety depend upon their solving it. In the conflict between the European Powers and the forces of nationalism, on which side should they range themselves? Religious affinities, long-standing ties of friendship, gratitude for favours received and fear of Moslem domination draw them to the side of Europe; but ties of language and culture, common feelings of humiliation and pride, and the desire to put an end to the religious dissensions of the past attract them to the nationalist camp. Divided loyalties of this sort are tragic, but they are also a necessary stage in the development of thought, alike for the individual and for whole peoples; it is in the struggle to reunite the divided personality that the intellect becomes mature. The Christians stand to the Syrian people roughly as the latter as a whole to the Arab people: it is in them that the tension which is felt vaguely and in some degree by all goes deepest and may reach its crisis earliest. But if the crisis is to be fruitful, they must try at one and the same time

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that which was established some years ago in the American University of Beirut. Its summer camps and other activities aim not so much at reforming the social life of the rural districts as at giving University students, who will in future constitute an important element in the ruling class, an awareness and understanding of the problems of rural life. Around the Jesuit University also there is growing up a movement which aims at making the educated Catholic youth of Lebanon more conscious of the social doctrine of their religion.

8

In addition to the problems inherent in the process of Westernization as such, there are others which are due to the particular phase which that process has reached. One such problem is created by the existence of two main streams of Western influence, French and Anglo-Saxon. The study of the French language and its culture has been stimulated by its being one of the official languages throughout the Mandatory period, by the teaching of it in almost all schools, both private and public, and by the long-standing connexion between France and certain elements in the population. The study of the English language is encouraged by commercial connexions with the Anglo-Saxon countries, by the existence of a number of American Protestant mission schools, by the movement of emigration and by the predominance of British influence in the neighbouring Arab countries.

Here as elsewhere, the exponents of French and Anglo-Saxon forms of Western culture have not always shown so great a solidarity with one another as might be desired; and they have often been estranged from one another, not only because of the conflict of British and French political interests and rivalry between Protestant and Catholic missions in the Levant, but also because of fundamental differences in the French and Anglo-Saxon concepts of culture and education.

The differences between the two are reflected in the two Universities to which they have given rise. The Université de S. Joseph is maintained and largely staffed by Jesuits and is Catholic in spirit; the American University was originally a Protestant college, but is now officially and so far as possible in practice unsectarian. The former has for many years been subsidized, at least in some of its faculties, by the French

177/891 Government, while the latter is wholly unconnected with any Western government. The former concentrates, so far as the majority of its students are concerned, upon mastery of the French language; while in the latter, although English is the medium of instruction, an attempt is made to teach Arabic thoroughly. The political spirit of the former is one of attachment to France and distrust of nationalism; while the latter has become in practice, and without the deliberate intention of its authorities, the intellectual centre of Arab nationalism. The former is perhaps a greater centre of research and scholarship, and has had prominent orientalists on its staff; while the latter, although it has an impressive record of scholarly and scientific work, has tended in the Anglo-Saxon manner to exalt character above intellect, and to concentrate upon the training of citizens and public servants.

Ultimately the fact that higher education is largely in the hands of foreign institutions and is given through the medium of foreign languages, and that the two main centres of it differ so widely from one another, may prove not to be a handicap to Arab culture. At present, although it may be unavoidable and in some ways advantageous, it undoubtedly causes difficulties. There is not always sufficient common ground of understanding between the graduates of the two universities; many of them are more at home in a foreign language than in their own; and many in the attempt to master two languages and two cultures fail to master either.

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

some recognized 'foreign protection' as a gift too dangerous to be accepted.

4

Sympathy for France depended not only upon her special links with certain elements in the population, but also upon the hold of French culture over the educated classes. Most educated people of whatever religion speak French; many know it as well as they know Arabic, and there are some, mainly among the Catholics, for whom it has replaced Arabic as their native language. French books are widely read, French social customs copied, and there are many who have travelled or studied in France and have a profound affection for the country, its people and its way of life.

It is the Catholic missions, working through schools and other institutions, which have played the largest part in winning Syria and Lebanon for French civilization. The mission-schools and colleges and the Université de S. Joseph in Beirut have always concentrated on imparting to their students a mastery of the French language, even if that should involve neglect of the teaching of Arabic. The majority of those who possess any understanding of European culture have been trained by the Jesuits, the Franciscans or other missionaries; and so long as the Catholic schools continue to provide the best intellectual education which the country can offer, there is no need to fear for the position of French culture. The social work carried out by the missions must also be mentioned; they have borne on their shoulders a great part of the work of alleviating social conditions, and have deserved the gratitude of those who care for social justice. Thus all French Governments, clerical or anti-clerical, regarded it as essential to maintain for the missions their right of unrestricted activity.

Long before the beginning of the French occupation, the Governments of France, seeing more clearly than some others the political significance of cultural ties, set themselves to preserve and extend the predominance of French civilization. The institution of the Mandate gave greater freedom for their efforts. In some ways the position of French culture was improved in the years between the two wars. French was one of the official languages and knowledge of it was an indispensable qualification for holding most of the higher

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offices in the administration. The organization and procedure of the law-courts was based upon French models, and the system of laws which they dispensed, although basically Islamic, was deeply influenced by the French codes. French was the main foreign language taught in official schools, and the official system of examinations was adapted from that of France. (This was one of the considerations which led certain sections of French opinion to oppose the Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936. Although the exchange of letters attached to the Treaty contained guarantees for the preservation of French cultural influences and provided for the recruitment of foreign officials and advisers from France in preference to any other country, the critics regarded the termination of the Mandate as likely to bring to an end the supremacy of French culture in Syria and Lebanon.)

In spite of the efforts of the French Government, however, it is probable that twenty years of French rule harmed rather than helped the position of French culture. The political grievances and discontents of those years, and the almost continuous opposition of the greater part of the Syrian and Lebanese people to their French masters, shook the ascendancy of France over men's spirits. In 1939 there were more who spoke French than there had been in 1918, but perhaps fewer who loved and believed in France.

5

France's economic interests in her Mandated Territories, although not of first-rate importance, nevertheless were not negligible. There were only a few thousand private French citizens resident in the country, and comparatively little landed property was in French hands; Syria and Lebanon had never been looked upon as regions for settlement. The total value of French investments was of the order of magnitude of one milliard francs; it had not increased to any great extent since before the War of 1914–1918. Most of it was invested in public utilities: the railways, the port of Beirut, electric power, waterworks and so on. A French company also held the monopoly for the production of tobacco. In fact, almost all public concessions of importance had been given to companies wholly or mainly French in ownership. About one-tenth of the total investment was sunk in the railways, almost all of which were controlled by the 'Damas-

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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shown in the table above are found in other parts of the Middle East but three indigenous sects need mention here: the Druzes, who are a mountain people professing a religion which derived from Islam in the eleventh century A.D., but became independent; the Alawis of the mountains behind Latakia, whose religion appears to be a dogmatic form of Shii Islam with some survivals of Christian ritual; and the Maronites, who are a Christian sect, living mainly in the north of Lebanon.

The religion of the majority of Syrians and of the head of the Syrian state is Sunni Islam; in the Lebanon, Muslims and Christians are fairly evenly divided and the President of the Republic is a Maronite Christian and the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim. The Christians of the Arab Levant have provided the Middle East with great leaders in journalism, letters, politics, and science, but in present-day Syria the Christians are mainly prominent in commerce and industry. There is hardly any dangerous animosity between the sects, but sectarian bonds are a very real force in the lives of people who for so long lived under the Turkish *millet* system whereby each sect was an administrative unit, the head of which exercised considerable authority.

So mixed a population living in a variety of environments naturally does not constitute one physical type, but some generalizations are hazarded for the sake of a fuller picture. Dark hair is almost universal but the skin of the town dweller is no darker than that of a Mediterranean European; the Syrians and Lebanese are not often as tall or as heavy as the average Englishman but they mature at an earlier age. The poorer nomad eats mainly bread, with milk and fruit and vegetables as less frequent additions and meat as an event, but in the towns and villages most people eat a full diet with rather more oil and spice than is used in Britain. The cultivator and the nomad wear local costumes but most townspeople wear European clothes; the tarbush or the head-cloth are usual but not universal headgear for men. Most Muslim women wear the veil, but in the towns the richer women are becoming more and more emancipated and, particularly in Beirut, many lead the same lives as Christian women. In Lebanon and in Damascus and Aleppo the way of life is very like that in southern Europe, and both countries make a pleasant home for a European.

History

Semitic-speaking people have inhabited for four or five millennia the area which is known historically as Syria, and yet for much of this period the rulers of what is now Syria an

20: Hourani S-5 (1945) 1947 M1 Middle East
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It is not simply isolated individuals who feel sympathy with the national movement. Sympathy is widespread among the Greek Orthodox, who are altogether Arab in culture and feeling. This is true of the clergy as well as the laity, and of the higher clergy as well as the lower: the Bishop of Hama was Vice-President of the Pan-Arab Conference of Bludan in 1937. The younger generation, brought up under the influence of nationalistic ideas in school and out of it, tend to be as wholly devoted to the Arab cause as their Moslem contemporaries.

Roman Catholics and Uniates tend to be less sympathetic, partly because they are less conscious and proud of their Arab tradition; partly because they are much influenced by French Catholic missions and schools; and partly because of all sections of the population they have been the best treated by the French authorities, so that the relaxation of French control means loss of their privileged position.

The leaders of the national movement have always professed the best possible intentions towards the Christians and have been quick to disown anything which might give the opposite impression. The periodical crises of nationalistic feeling have been accompanied by scenes of Moslem-Christian fraternization. This attitude on the part of the leaders often arises from a genuine desire to build a national unity which will transcend religious differences and make them less acute; or else from a desire not to alienate Western opinion, which tends to care more for minorities than for majorities.

Although the more enlightened nationalists are tolerant, among those who are less enlightened there still exists considerable suspicion of the Christians as a whole. It springs not only from ancient prejudice; it is due to the fact that certain of the Christians, not wholly against their will, have been used by the French as instruments of domination and as a pretext for delaying the grant of independence. Once the problem of Franco-Arab relations is definitely settled, the tension between Moslems and Christians will gradually be relaxed.

The Armenians

In general, the Armenians in Syria do not need special attention. Most of what has been said about their fellow-countrymen in Lebanon is true of them also. It is necessary only to call attention to the special situation existing in Aleppo, where the Armenian

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
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Chapter 20

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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EDUCATION in Syria underwent a process of radical change in the years 1943–46. As Syria was under French mandate prior to World War II, the educational system had been gradually shaped after the French model with a twelve-year ladder of general education involving a primary-certificate examination, an examination for the *brevet*, and examinations for the *Baccalauréat*, First and Second Parts, the former divided into scientific and literary sections, and the latter into mathematics and philosophy sections. While instruction was in Arabic, French occupied a prominent place in the curriculum. The French adviser to the Ministry of Education wielded decisive influence over the educational decisions of the Ministry. Almost all educational missions were sent to France, and French-trained Syrians held the key positions in administration and teaching.

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With the declaration of the independence of Syria in 1941 and the holding of new elections which resulted in a nationalist victory, it was natural that the new Syrian government should wish to pursue a national policy in education, free from French influences, and calculated primarily to develop a Syrian-Arab type of education.

In order to do this, the Syrian government procured the services of the well-known Arab educator, Satiʿ al-Husri, a man of outstanding ability who, after making a special study of Swiss, French, and Belgian education, had become the most prominent educator in Turkey prior to 1914. After the separation of the Arab provinces from Turkey he joined the short-lived Arab government of the late King Faysal in Syria as its Minister of Education. Upon the fall of this government he accompanied King Faysal to Iraq where he became Director General of Education, laying the main foundation of the Iraqi educational system and continuing to exercise considerable influence on that system until 1936. He left Iraq in 1941 to reside in Lebanon, and since he was of Syrian origin, he was invited by the Syrian government to study its educational system and report on

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-8 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
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About one-third of the student body was from other countries, mainly Arab.

Teaching at the Syrian University is conducted entirely in Arabic. The Faculty of Medicine is the only such faculty in the Arabic world which teaches in Arabic.

Educational Missions

Educational missions were sent chiefly to France prior to World War II. With the French government as mandatary power, with French advisers to the Ministry of Education, and with the Syrian educational system following French educational methods and ideas, this was to be expected. As has already been said, graduates of French universities and institutions were shown a decided preference in appointments to posts in the Ministry of Education. The situation was not different in other departments of the government. It was only natural, therefore, that even students going abroad for study at their own expense usually preferred to go to France.

Even in 1943–44, when the French grip on Syria had loosened, 58 out of a toal of 101 students on educational missions were studying in France; most of them had begun their study in the prewar period. Of the other 43, there were 37 in Egypt and 6 in Beirut.

For the year 1946–47 it was planned to send 120 students abroad. None of these was being sent to France, partly because of the aversion to the French that has developed in Syria, and partly because the new Secondary-School Certificate is no longer recognized in France. Most of the students were being sent by the Ministry of Education. The remainder were being sent by other ministries. The countries to which the students are being sent are Belgium, Switzerland (evidently taking the place of France), Great Britain, the United States, and Egypt. Only a few are destined to study in Great Britain or the United States largely because of the difficulty of securing admission to American and British universities. The subjects to be studied cover a wide range and include the various branches of engineering, architecture, technical education, agriculture, irrigation, mathematics, the sciences, finance, medicine, public and school health, law, archeology, Semitics, history, English, education, commerce, and Arabic literature.

The Education of Teachers

The education of teachers in Syria has gone through a number of stages. In the latest of these, two kinds of teachers colleges were maintained: the

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
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variation exists between the living conditions of the more prosperous farmers and of the peasants, many of the latter possessing little beyond the barest necessities.

The larger cities, as Damascus and Aleppo, have been important junctions on trade routes from India to the Mediterranean for centuries, and reflect the influence of both Eastern and Western civilizations. They are a combination of the old Arab-type city and the modern, with most of the amenities of urban life. The older sections are usually made up of several quarters, dominated by different racial or religious groups. The houses are constructed of stone, brick or reinforced concrete and stucco, with flat or tiled roofs. In Damascus, about one third of the inhabitants live within the limits of the ancient city and a third in the modern residential developments.

The Bedouin follow essentially the same pattern of life in Syria as in other countries of the Near and Middle East. The nomadic tribes dwell in tents made of goats' hair, usually in close association with their livestock. Their standards of living are primitive, both in the tent encampments and the semipastoral settlements.

ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION

Water Supplies

Water supplies are deficient in many sections of the country, and acute shortages may be experienced during the dry season. In the rural areas, domestic supplies are obtained from deep or shallow wells, springs or rivers, and sometimes from rain-water cisterns. *Korazes*, or wells connected by underground conduits which often extend for several miles, and waterholes, dug in the plains or near watercourses, are used in some districts. The village supplies are frequently polluted and responsible for the spread of intestinal infections.

The water supply of Damascus is taken from an underground reservoir at 'Ain el Fije, which is fed by springs in the Anti-